

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 ISO-00 SS-07 AID-01 NSC-06 /022 W

----- 124343

R 111437Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4917

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MONROVIA 1337

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, LI

SUBJECT: VISIT OF CODEL DIGGS

REF: STATE 046707

1. CONGRESSMAN CHARLES C. DIGGS, JR. VISITED MONROVIA ON MARCH 3/4. HE WAS MET AT THE AIRPORT BY THE DCM AND BY A DELEGATION FROM THE LIBERIAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES INCLUDING CHAIRMAN HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE PLUS THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. CODEL DIGGS WAS ESCORTED DIRECTLY TO THE EMBASSY RESIDENCE FOR A BRIEF CHAT PRIOR TO HIS APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT TOLBERT AT 11 A.M.

2. CODEL DIGGS' MEETING WITH PRESIDENT TOLBERT (WHICH WAS ARRANGED SUNDAY EVENING ON RECEIPT OF REFTEL) LASTED APPROXIMATELY 50 MINUTES. AFTER THE COMPLIMENTARY OPENING, CODEL DIGGS RE-COUNTED TO PRESIDENT TOLBERT THE RESULTS OF THE LAST ELECTIONS IN THE US, THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEW CONGRESS, THE REFORM MEASURES TAKEN IN CONSTITUTING THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE OF THE CONGRESS, CURRENT ADDITIONAL MOVES TOWARDS REFORM SUCH AS THE ANTI-FILIBUSTER DEBATE, ETC. CODEL DIGGS SAID THAT ONE OF HIS CHIEF TASKS WAS TO TRY TO FORM AN "AFRICAN LOBBY" IN THE CONGRESS AND IN THE UNITED STATES. HE FELT THAT MUCH PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE RESPECT IN RECENT YEARS BOTH WITHIN THE CONGRESS AND IN THE COUNTRY AT LARGE. MORE PEOPLE WERE AWARE OF AND INTERESTED IN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTS AND HE FELT SURE THIS TREND WOULD CONTINUE.

3. CODEL DIGGS THEN TURNED TO PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S MEETING WITH
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PRIME MINISTER VORSTER AND COMPLIMENTED TOLBERT ON INITIATIVE HE

HAD TAKEN TOWARD DIALOGUE WITH SOUTH AFRICA. HE ASKED FOR PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S ASSESSMENT OF VORSTER AND PROSPECTS FOR DIALOGUE. IN REVIEWING VARIOUS EVENTS LEADING UP TO HIS MEETING WITH VORSTER, TOLBERT RESPONDED AT SOME LENGTH ALONG THE LINES OF MONROVIA'S 1159. CODEL DIGGS PUSHED RATHER HARD AT VARIOUS POINTS IN TOLBERT'S ACCOUNT AS TO WHETHER VORSTER HAD IN FACT CHANGED HIS SPOTS OR WHETHER VORSTER WAS NOT IN FACT USING CONTACTS WITH AFRICAN LEADERS AS A PUBLIC RELATIONS EXERCISE WITH NO REAL INTENTION OF CHANGING SOUTH AFRICAN POLICIES OR PRACTICES. TOLBERT REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT VORSTER WAS SINCERE IN DESIRING A DIALOGUE AND WAS PREPARED WITHIN THE LIMITS OF HIS DOMESTIC POLITICAL EQUATION TO PROGRESSIVELY AMELIORATE CONDITIONS OF THE NON-WHITES IN SA. TOLBERT EMPHASIZED THAT HIS EFFORTS WERE DIRECTED TO DETERMINING WHETHER A REAL DIALOGUE COULD TAKE PLACE. HE POINTED TO THE DANGERS OF ISOLATING SA FROM THE PRESSURES OF PUBLIC OPINION AND THE NECESSITY OF MAINTAINING PRESSURE FOR CHANGE ON VORSTER. TOLBERT EMPHASIZED THAT HIS EFFORTS SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR WHAT WAS NOW TAKING PLACE BUT AS A SUPPLEMENT TO OTHER EFFORTS. AT LEAST VORSTER WAS TALKING WITH BLACK LEADERS. TOLBERT FELT IT WAS NOW UP TO VORSTER TO DEMONSTRATE BY CONCRETE ACTIONS IN SA THAT HE WAS PREPARED TO RECOGNIZE AFRICAN CONCERNS AND MOVE TOWARDS MEETING THEM. IN THIS CONNECTION HE NOTED THAT SIGNIFICANT CONCRETE ACTIONS BY VORSTER MIGHT BE THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, REMOVAL OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE FROM RHODESIA, CONCRETE STEPS TOWARD INDEPENDENCE FOR NAMIBIA, ETC. ON THE QUESTION OF MAINTAINING PRESSURE ON VORSTER, CODEL DIGGS SAID THAT HE HAD PROPOSED ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS THAT ONE WAY MIGHT BE TO HAVE BLACK AFRICAN COUNTRIES SIMULTANEOUSLY ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SA AND SEND RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES. CODEL DIGGS FELT THAT SUCH ACTION WOULD HAVE TO BE AN OAU ACTION SO THAT IT APPLIED TO ALL AND DID NOT BECOME A DIVISIVE ISSUE. HE FELT THAT RESIDENT BLACK AFRICAN DIPLOMATS COULD HAVE A GREAT EFFECT THROUGH VISIBLY GOING ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS IN THE SA CAPITAL.

4. CODEL DIGGS THEN NOTED HIS STRONG OPPOSITION TO THE NOMINATION OF AMBASSADOR DAVIS AND INQUIRED AS TO TOLBERT'S VIEWS. TOLBERT SAID HE WAS AFRAID THAT AMBASSADOR DAVIS, IF CONFIRMED, WOULD RECEIVE A MIXED REACTION AMONG AFRICAN NATIONS. HE FELT SOME AFRICAN LEADERS WOULD ACCEPT AMBASSADOR DAVIS AT FACE VALUE

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WHILE OTHERS WOULD BE DEFINITELY MORE RESERVED. TOLBERT EMPHASIZED THAT IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER THAT US AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES COMMUNICATE FREELY AND FRANKLY. HE WAS CONCERNED THAT ALTHOUGH AMBASSADOR DAVIS MIGHT IN FACT BE THE BEST QUALIFIED MAN FOR THE JOB, PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED WHICH WOULD HAMPER HIS COMMUNICATION WITH CERTAIN AFRICAN LEADERS.

5. CODEL DIGGS (AT MY PREVIOUS REQUEST) THEN EXPLAINED TO PRESIDENT TOLBERT THE STATUS OF CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE REPEAL OF THE BYRD AMENDMENT AND REVIEWED PROSPECTS FOR THE FOREIGN AID BILL. IN CONCLUSION CODEL DIGGS SAID THAT PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FROM WASHINGTON HE HAD SEND A LETTER TO VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER URGING THAT HE HEAD THE DELEGATION FOR THE CEREMONY ON THE OCCASION OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF MOZAMBIQUE. HE FELT THAT IF A RANKING AMERICAN IS TO VISIT AFRICA THIS YEAR IT MOST LOGICALLY SHOULD BE VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER. HE CLOSER BY THE STATEMENT THAT WHEN THE HISTORY OF AFRICAN LIBERATION IS WRITTEN, A SPECIAL CHAPTER SHOULD BE DEDICATED TO PRESIDENT TOLBERT FOR HIS SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE CAUSE.

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ACTION H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4918

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MONROVIA 1337

6. AT THE LUNCHEON HOSTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE HENRIES AT THE DUCOR HOTEL, VICE PRESIDENT GREENE AND A GOOD CROSS SECTION OF LIBERIAN MINISTERS AND RANKING MEMBERS OF BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS ATTENDED. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE LUNCHEON, SPEAKER HENRIES EXTENDED A TOAST IN WHICH HE LAUDED CODEL DIGGS' CONTRIBUTION TO UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN AMERICANS AND LIBERIANS, THE SPECIAL RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND THE DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP PROVIDED BY PRESIDENT TOLBERT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS OF LIBERIA. CODEL DIGGS RESPONDED WITH A SHORT TOAST NOTING THE EARLY CONNECTIONS OF HIS FAMILY WITH LIBERIA, HIS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE GREATER INTEREST AND UNDERSTANDING OF AFRICAN ISSUES IN THE CONGRESS AND IN THE UNITED STATES AT LARGE, AND ADMIRATION FOR PRESIDENT TOLBERT. HIS TOAST WAS WELL RECEIVED AND CONTAINED NOTHING CONTROVERSIAL.

7. CODEL DIGGS INSISTED ON HOLDING A PRESS CONFERENCE ALTHOUGH MEMBERS OF THE PRESS HAD BEEN PRESENT AT THE LUNCHEON. IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE THE MAJORITY OF THE QUESTIONS WERE DEVOTED TO

TOLBERT'S INITIATIVE WITH VORSTER AND THE NOMINATION OF AMB. DAVIS AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS. CODEL DIGGS FOLLOWED HIS USUAL FORMULATIONS ON THESE SUBJECTS. HE ALSO MENTIONED HIS LETTER TO VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER.

8. CODEL DIGGS DEPARTED FOR ABIDJAN ON MARCH 4. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED TO THE AIRPORT BY THE DCM, ECON/COMM COUNSELLOR AND THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL. EN ROUTE TO ROBERTSFIELD, CODEL DIGGS PAUSED BRIEFLY AT THE U.S. MILITARY MISSION ASSISTED CIVIC ACTION PROGRAMS (CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSING AND RICE FIELDS) BY THE MILITARY AT CAMP SCHIEFFELIN AND HAD A BRIEF TOUR OF THE FIRESTONE PLANTATION AT HARBEL.
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9. SEPARATE PROGRAM WAS ARRANGED AS REQUESTED FOR CODEL DIGGS' SON DOUGLASS WITH DCM'S DAUGHTER SERVING AS ESCORT OFFICER. CODEL DIGGS DINED AT RESIDENCE ON MARCH 3 WITH COM, DCM, SECTION CHIEFS, HEADS OF AGENCIES AND THEIR SPOUSES.

10. COMMENT: CODEL DIGGS APPEARED TO BE MOST PLEASED WITH THE ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR HIM WHICH PROCEEDED WITHOUT A HITCH. HE WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED THAT PRESIDENT TOLBERT HAD REARRANGED HIS SCHEDULE TO RECEIVE HIM AND THAT THE DISCUSSION LASTED APPROXIMATELY 50 MINUTES. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT PRESIDENT TOLBERT PLACED PRESIDENTIAL MERCEDES LIMOUSINE AND POLICE ESCORT AT DISPOSAL CODEL DIGGS. THIS TREATMENT NORMALLY RESERVED FOR HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENTS AND THEIR PRINCIPAL DEPUTIES.
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